

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

A. J. Miller House

AND/OR COMMON

Miller-Hemp House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 693

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Middlebrook

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Virginia

Augusta

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ MUSEUM

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ PARK

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ MILITARY

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Otie McCutchan Hemp

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1

CITY, TOWN

Middlebrook

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Augusta County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Staunton

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

June 1980

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The A. J. Miller House is one of several brick Italianate houses built in the Middlebrook area of southwestern Augusta County during the last decades of the 19th century. After the introduction of the square, double-pile Georgian plan into this area in the 1850s, this became a popular house type for local farmers. The three-bay facade, with central Italianate entrance and tripartite second-floor window, and paired interior chimneys were familiar local features of this design. The five-course American bond with Flemish variant, a late example of this type of bonding, illustrates the persistence of the rich local masonry tradition. Exterior decoration is restricted to the simple bracketed cornice and the carved consoles and bracket trim around the Italianate entrance. The low-hipped roof is covered with standing-seam metal.

The interior fabric, which survives with very few alterations, reveals typical late 19th-century vernacular woodwork designs. The eight mantels adhere to the chaste classical forms common in mid-19th-century Greek Revival decoration, but the carved friezes reveal a response to the more elaborate Victorian designs. In all the rooms except the southwest parlor, one or two built-in cupboards flank the mantels. Interior trim includes shouldered door moldings in the first-floor rooms, heavy Victorian door and window moldings throughout the house, molded baseboards, and four-panel doors with heavy applied moldings. This more restrained woodwork characterizes late 19th-century decoration in rural Augusta County. The most ornate feature is the single-run staircase, with its heavily turned newel and turned balusters that project outside the open string and end with a carved pendant drop.

The spectacular interior painting in the A. J. Miller House represents one of the best survivals of the work of a rural itinerant painter in Virginia. The artist, G. B. Jones, signed his work in the hallway and provided the date June 17, 1892. Jones's work here at the Miller House illustrates the full repertoire of the painter, from landscape scenes in the central passage to grained and marbleized woodwork, including doors, cupboards, and mantels. Several minor wood graining and painting projects in the Middlebrook and Greenville areas can clearly be attributed to Jones, although there are no other examples of wall paintings in this area.

The central passage displays an unusual variety of wall paintings. A painted pink modillioned cornice, highlighted with gold and black shading to create a three-dimensional appearance, adorns the blue walls. The name of each room is painted in a pink panel over each of the passage doors--the parlor (southwest), dining room (northwest), cook-room (northeast), and chamber (southeast). Several large landscape scenes, enclosed by a double border of Queen Anne stylized plant designs and six one-inch-thick blue bands, line the passage walls, while a series of Victorian "vignettes" decorates the wall ascending along the staircase.

The two scenes along the north wall of the passage depict hunting subjects. In the west painting (1) a string of dogs leads from the background to a deer in the foreground. There, another hunting dog is attacking the neck of a deer, and a stream of blood pours from the wound. This hunt scene is set in a mountainous area with a variety of trees surrounding the lake in the center. This fresco of the kill is the most elaborate in the house and is the one that has been signed--G. B. Jones, June 17, 1892. To the east, a painting of similar size integrates a fox hunt with a domestic scene (2). The central focus is four dogs chasing a fox along a road, again in a mountain and lake area. To the right of the road sits a small, two-bay rectangular cabin with a central chimney. A woman

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1884	Builder/Architect	unknown
----------------	------	-------------------	---------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The A. J. Miller House contains some of the most extensive and best-preserved works of a rural itinerant painter in late 19th-century Virginia. The wide variety of painted decoration suggests the creativity and broad repertoire of artist G. B. Jones, who signed and dated his work June 17, 1892. Vivid landscape scenes cover the central passage walls, while Victorian "vignettes" line the staircase wall. The room names painted in panels over each passage door are particularly unusual. The second-floor rooms reveal particularly elaborate wood graining in several tones and bright marbling adorned with painted stylized floral and decorative motifs. The Valley of Virginia boasts several fine early 19th-century examples of colorful interior painting, attributed to the German settlement and influence. This decorative spirit continues throughout the 19th century, but decoration usually becomes restricted to mantels or doors. The Miller House illustrates the best of this lingering local painting tradition and more unusual plaster wall decoration.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ananias "Jack" Miller purchased "several tracts together containing about 273 acres of land" from his father-in-law George Bosserman on November 23, 1874. The value of buildings increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 in 1884. Since this higher value was also recorded eight years later in 1892 when Jones made his paintings, the increase reflects the construction of the present dwelling. Miller left the property to Herman Welland. Otie McCutchan Hemp has lived here since 1925 and purchased the house in February 1946.

AMcC

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Augusta County Land Books 89, 336
Tax Records 1880-1885, 1888, 1892, 1894
Will Book 60

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY check map.

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
E	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
G	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
F	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
H	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries are a rectangle drawn to include the house, its immediate yard, and the outbuilding across the road.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

March 10, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director

DATE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

A. J. Miller House, Augusta County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

Page 1

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

7. DESCRIPTION

carrying buckets of water is climbing the steps from the lake to the house, while two men are riding horses on the other side of the road.

On the opposite passage wall is another mountain landscape with a reindeer pulling a sled in the foreground (3). Brown and green deciduous trees are painted with rough brush strokes, unlike most of Jones's trees, which consist of several arch-like branches stacked on a trunk. Directly west of this scene, above the door to the cellar stairs, is a smaller, more peaceful fishing scene (4). A man and his dog sit at the lake with their backs toward the viewer, but these images are considerably smaller than the blue jay perched on a tree branch overhead. A tall white bird, holding a frog in its beak, dominates the scene along the stair spandrel. Like the other landscape scenes, this includes a small body of water in the foreground and mountains in the background.

The series of "vignettes" along the south wall are more two-dimensional in quality. Sharing the panel off the front door are an eagle to the top and two yellow songbirds below. The first panel over the steps is certainly the most lively, with a jumble of figures and decorative motifs. A girl swinging on a hammock is shown in the upper left corner, while the picture of a man dressed in knickers and jacket, tipping his wide-brimmed hat, is pushed to the right and framed by its own light border band with circles. Stylized and natural floral designs and abstracted pinwheels complete this rather free-form panel. A painting of Buffalo Bill astride his horse is located next up the stairs (8). This popular image of the 1880s and 1890s has been painted against a dark background and framed with delicate Queen Anne geometric border designs. A painting of the crucifixion, formerly at the top of the stairs, has been painted over.

According to the present owners, the parlor walls and ceiling had also been painted at one time with columns in each corner, a border pattern along the cornice, and circular designs on the ceiling. Presently, all the woodwork on the first floor is painted white.

The second floor displays a variety of graining, marbleizing, and painting. All of the passage doors have been grained with golden oak panels and darker brown rails and stiles. In the northwest rooms, the orange-rust marbled mantel has been finished with black and yellow trim outlining the pilasters and scalloped frieze and creating a Greek fret pattern across the cornice band. Stylized floral designs adorn the points of the scallops, and reddish-colored circle patches accent the orange background. The green marbled mantel frame adds a complementary touch to the design. The southwest room contains a green and yellow marbled mantel, again decorated with Greek fret designs and stylized Art Nouveau flower and vase motifs. The mantel is set against a black background with gold, red, and green streaks. The side cupboards and door and window trim are grained in a deep mahogany color. The mantel in the southeast room (11) has been painted brown with balloons and more stylized floral designs and vase and flower motifs on the pilasters. The cupboards and doors here have also received two tones of graining--golden oak panels with dark brown rails and stiles. The trim throughout the northeast room has been painted white, but the ghost of a cat and flower design is still evident on the mantel. The south closet in this room was converted to a doorway when the two north rooms were remodeled into an apartment.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

A. J. Miller House, Augusta County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 7

Page 2

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

7. DESCRIPTION

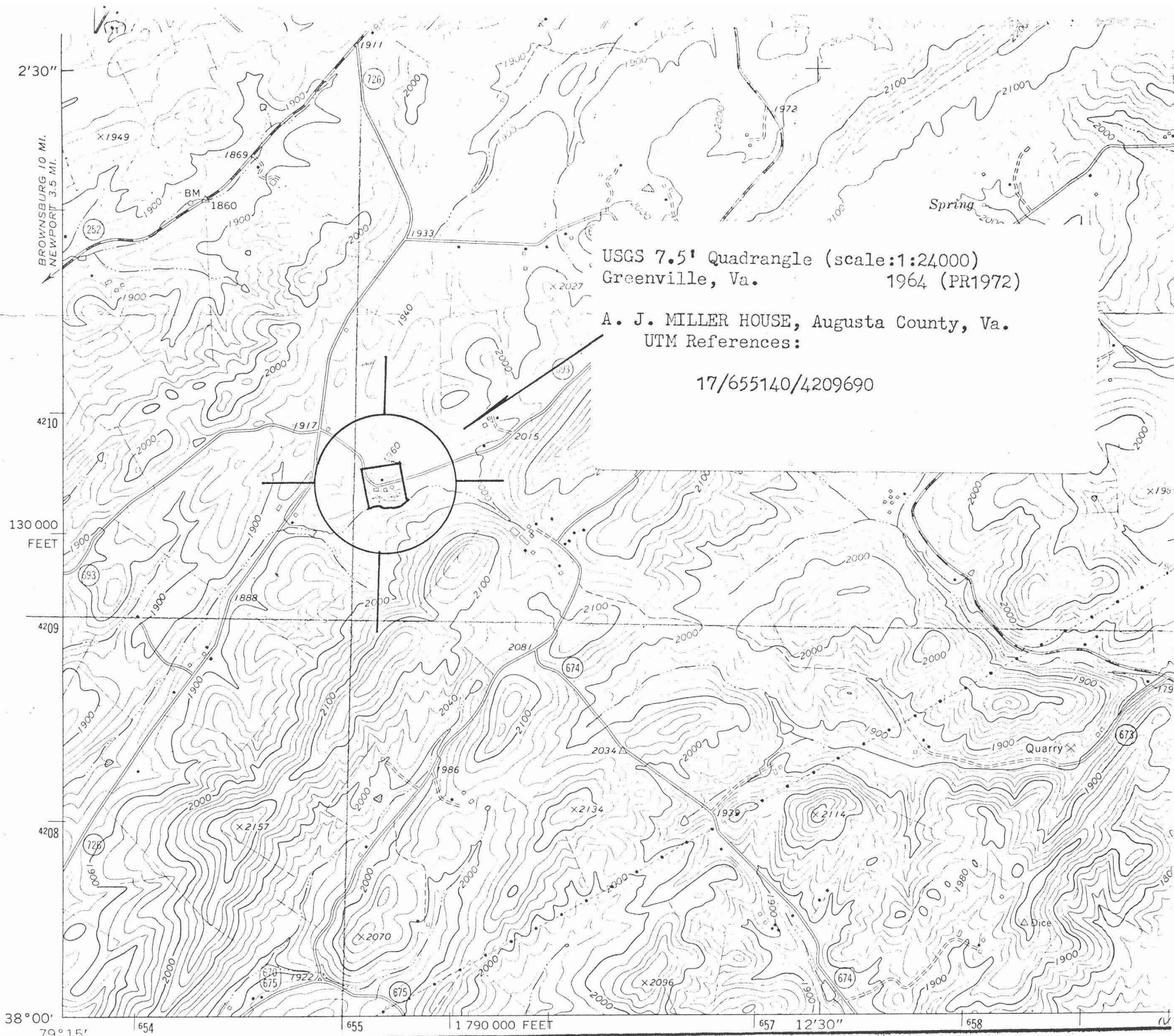
Later alterations include the replacement of one-bay, one-story porches at each outside entrance by a sweeping, neocolonial design. The kitchen pantry off the back porch has been remodeled into a bathroom, and a second bath has been added at the back of the second-floor passage. Also on the second story, the south cupboard between the north rooms was converted into a doorway when the two north rooms were remodeled into an apartment.

The four-room full basement has been whitewashed, and the present owners have heard that this was used as a kitchen at one time.

Two barns and a granary, situated across the road from the main house, and a carriage house and chicken house to the northeast date from the turn of the century through the 20th century.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries have been drawn as a rectangle to include the house, its immediate yard, and the outbuildings across State Route 693.



USGS 7.5' Quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Greenville, Va. 1964 (PR1972)

A. J. MILLER HOUSE, Augusta County, Va.
UTM References:

17/655140/4209690

BROWNSBURG 10 MI.
NEWPORT 3.5 MI.

4210
130 000
FEET
4209
4208

38°00' 79°15' 654 655 1 790 000 FEET 657 12'30" 658